

A NEW DAY FOR A GODLY MAN

Job 42

Intro: We are introduced to Job in the first verse of chapter 1 in the book that carries his name. (Read Job 1:1.).

He had a large family of seven sons and three daughters. As far as his wealth was concerned, verse 3 of chapter 1 tells us that “this man was the greatest of all of the men of the east.” It is not often that wealth and godliness are combined in the same person, but they were in Job. His godliness was evident in his concern for his children. (Read verses 3 and 4 of chapter 1, noting especially the last words of verse 4.)

Prior to the first series of testings that Satan brought on Job, we have the Lord’s testimony concerning Job. (See Job 1:8.) This clearly means that Job was the godliest man on the face of the whole earth.

Then it was that Job heard the bad news that the Sabeans had come and had taken away his oxen and his donkeys, and had killed the servants who were caring for them.

Immediately afterwards what is called “the fire of God” came from heaven, and destroyed his sheep and the servants who were taking care of them.

And then without a break a third messenger came with the news that three bands of Chaldeans came and robbed him of his camels, and killed the servants who were taking care of them.

These three calamities were followed by a third which was the worst of all. His oldest son was having a party for the other brothers and his sisters when a great wind came, and the house collapsed falling on his children, and all of them were killed.

Amazingly we are told how Job responded to all of this, and the description is given in the last three verses of the chapter.

But this was not the end of his troubles.

Satan came again, and the Lord said the same thing to Satan that he had said at the first. (See 2:1-3.) So in the eyes of the Lord, there was no change in Job in spite of all of the troubles that had come upon him.

But Satan was not through. He told the Lord that if Job himself were affected, that Job would curse the Lord to His face. So for a second time the Lord allowed Satan to do what he wanted to do, but he could not kill Job.

— So Satan went out, and afflicted Job with boils from head to foot.

When I was very young, probably about the time that I started grade school, my Dad was afflicted with a carbuncle which is defined in the dictionary as “a painful local inflammation of the subcutaneous tissue, larger and more serious than a boil.” It was located on the back of his neck with hundreds of his pores oozing with infection. My Dad almost died. There was no penicillin in those days, and for days my Dad was in bed, and the doctors did not expect him to pull through. But the Lord graciously spared him, and yet for the rest of his life he carried a scar across the back of his neck that was probably four or five inches long and two or three inches wide. I don’t think that I knew the story of Job in those days, but since then, every time I have read this book, Job’s troubles have reminded me of what my Dad had, only Job’s problem was much worse.

— This was too much for Job’s wife, and so she told him in those now famous words, “Dost thou still retain thine integrity? Curse God, and die.” I am sure that Job’s wife expected him to die, and she was mad at the Lord, and so she said what she did.

But again we see how Job had been sustained by the grace of God, and so in 2:10 we have his equally famous response to his wife. (Read 2:10.)

At this point in Job’s trials we read about the coming of Job’s three friends, Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar. And from chapter 3 to the end of chapter 31 we have the conversation between Job and these three men who came to tell Job that his trials meant that he was guilty of sin, and that the Lord was punishing him. Job strongly defended himself, and Job 32:1 that his friends saw that they were getting nowhere with Job, and so they “ceased to answer Job, because he was righteous in his own eyes.”

— I am passing over all of that dialogue which is most interesting to read, but I think that we can appreciate Job’s attitude from what even the Lord said about him. Here was the godliest man on the face of the earth, and yet he had troubles that probably could not have been duplicated at that time any place on the earth. He was a man who loved God. He sought to please God. He had been good to people less fortunate than he was, and so there was a lot of unselfishness in his life. His wife knew that he was a very

good man, and she could not understand why someone like Job would have to suffer like he did.

Well, after Job's three friends gave up on Job, another man began to speak to Job. His name was Elihu. He was very angry when he started to speak to Job, and the substance of his message is given to us in Job 32:2. He was offended with Job "because he justified himself rather than God." And Elihu was furious with Job's three friends because they did not have an answer for what was going on, "and yet condemned Job.

Job 32 through 37 give us the record of what Elihu said to Job, and it is very significant that Job did not respond at all to Job. And it seems to me that the reason Job did not respond was because he knew that Elihu was right. There may be many times in our lives when it seems that the Lord is not doing the right thing by us, especially if it has been in our hearts to please Him. But one thing is certain: the Lord will never sin. He never has done a single wrong thing, and He never will. He is righteous in all that He is, and He is righteous in all that He does. And no true child of God will argue with those statements.

However, following all that Elihu said, a most wonderful thing happened to Job. The Lord spoke to Job, and we have in chapters 38, 39, and 40 one of those most wonderful revelations of the Lord to be found anywhere in the Old Testament. These words of the Lord are worth reading over and over again, especially in our times of testing. None of us has experienced what Job experienced, but we need this truth just as much as Job did. And there is one truth that comes out of the book of Job which none of us can afford to miss. It is this: There is no person so godly but what he or she needs to grow in godliness.

One of Jerry Bridges' earlier books carried the title, *The Pursuit of Holiness*. It may have been his first book. I have forgotten the order in which his books were written. But the title and the book suggests in no uncertain way that *the pursuit of holiness is a life-long pursuit*. Just because Job was the godliest man on the face of the earth, did not mean that his godliness was complete. The book of Job teaches us that there is always more that the Lord needs to do in all of our lives.

Job was not suffering because he was a great sinner, nor because he was hiding some sin in his life. We as the Lord's people can do that, and the Lord does deal with us if that is the case. But that was not Job's problem. If Job had a problem it was that he couldn't understand the Lord's deal-

ings with him since he had been living a life in which his greatest desire was to please the Lord. And this is what he was doing. But he needed to learn more in order that he might go farther in his fellowship with the Lord.

The Psalms help us to see how David was often confused by the trials that he was going through, but his trials always made him turn to the Lord with greater determination than ever before. David knew that there was no one to whom he could turn who could do for him what the Lord could do. And so his trials were designed by the Lord to make him more diligent in seeking the Lord.

But in Job 42 we see the conclusion of the matter, and I want us to look first at:

I. JOB'S CONFESSION (Job 42:1-6).

First, he acknowledged the omniscience of God. See this in v. 1.

Second, he confessed his own ignorance, and that had come into an understanding of truth that he had never really known before. So this shows that not only do we need to be holier than we are, but that the way the Lord brings us to that place is by a greater understanding of the Lord and of His ways.

But the third point in Job's confession is just as important as the first two. We see that he had come to a different attitude toward himself. And he used the word, "abhor." He despised himself for the way he had defended himself, and, in doing so, had placed the blame on the Lord. And he repented, truly repented, for the way he had spoken and for what he had thought. We don't know how the Lord appeared to Job, whether it was in some physical shape, or what. But we do know that He appeared to Job in words. He appeared to Job in what He said to Job. And that is exactly the way He appears to us – in His Word! And so the more we know of the Lord, and of His ways, the more we will abhor ourselves that we have ever questioned God, and the more we will look to Him to bring us blessing out of our trials.

What happened next?

II. JOB AND THOSE FIRST THREE FRIENDS (Job 42:7-10).

It would have been very easy for Job to have gone through the rest of his life despising those three friends who came to him at the beginning. But the Lord did not want to leave that relationship the way it was. And so speaking to Eliphaz, the Lord told him and the other two men to bring seven bullocks and seven rams, and bring them to Job where they would offer burnt offerings to the Lord. And the Lord told them that Job would pray for them.

You see, these friends needed to be brought along in the plan and purpose of God for their lives too. And so the Lord was restoring their fellowship, not only with Himself, but with Job.

And Job prayed for them! Don't you wish that we had a record of that prayer? What do you think that Job said to the Lord about them, and how he interceded for them. It must have been a wonderful prayer because that was the real turning point in these trials which are called, "the captivity of Job." This means that Job was also fully restored to fellowship with the Lord.

This was followed by:

III. A GREAT REUNION (Job 42:11).

What a time of blessing this was! Many had probably given Job up for dead, but the Lord restored him. Trials take up time, but they come to an end. Do you suppose that Job had a lot of scars like my Dad did, which he carried through the rest of his life? He probably did. The Lord often leaves some evidence to remind us of lessons He has taught us.

And then we read of:

IV. THE LORD'S BLESSING UPON JOB (Job 42:12-15).

Instead of 7,000 sheep the Lord gave him 14,000. Instead of 3,000 camels the Lord gave him 6,000 camels. Instead of 500 yoke of oxen, the Lord gave him 1,000. And instead of 500 female donkeys, the Lord gave him 1,000. The Lord doubled all that he had had before.

And the Lord also gave him seven sons and three daughters, and this was double, too, because Job had seven sons and three daughters with the Lord. The one who had the problem here was Mrs. Job – ten more pregnancies, but ten more children, and the daughters were especially beauti-

ful. And their names are recorded here. And Job gave them portions of the inheritance that were equal with that of their brothers.

V. THE CONCLUSION OF THE BOOK (Job 42:16-17).

It is not mentioned in the first of the book how old Job was, nor do we know that he had any grandchildren. Evidently he was quite young, and there probably were no grandchildren. But he lived 140 years after his trial, and saw four generations of his children.

Concl: There is no other book like this in the Bible. No one is ever given the Lord's commendation like Job received. But we have a lasting testimony to the faithfulness of the Lord, His infinite wisdom, His constant goodness, and His power to accomplish in all of our lives what He sees that we need. May the Lord teach us the difference between merely hearing about the Lord, and really seeing Him as He is revealed to us in His Word.